

**GOLDEN VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 19, 2016  
4:30 p.m.  
Golden Valley River School**

**9601 Lake Natoma Drive  
Orangevale, CA 95662  
Room 5**

*Minutes*

*OPEN SESSION*

1. **Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 4:32**
  
2. **Roll Call: Board Members Present:** Joanne Ahola; Jody Begley; G'Anna Burke; John Hanafee; Ally Jakubicka; Becky Page; Sarah Sullivan; Ryan Sutton; Eric Walder. **Board Members Absent:** Zachary Phillips. **Guests:** John Baker; Kathryn Blankenburg; Caleb Buckley; Rhoda Cortez; Ruth Cummings; Amala Easton; Carol Evans; Nicole Grant; Susan Gutierrez; Debi Lenny; Stephanie Lorenz; Lisa Moraga; Andy Silvert; Michelle Smith; Marnie Whitworth.
  
3. **Flag Salute/Quote/Moment of Silence:** Debi Lenny read a quote by Nikki Giovanni, "A lot of people resist transition and therefore never allow themselves to enjoy who they are. Embrace the change, no matter what it is; once you do, you can learn about the new world you're in and take advantage of it."
  
4. **Public Comment:** Ruth Cummings presented a letter/packet to the Board. She feels her oldest child greatly benefited from her education here. She came here today because she has concerns about the departure of Lee Pope and is afraid there will be no replacement. She feels the parent body should be better educated about Waldorf, that her boys are not getting the education that her daughter did, and the administrative load at the top is too large. She asked why Golden Valley (GV) can't fund things like strings programs, etc. She requests the Board to look at how Alice Birney is implementing their programs.  
  
Jody Begley: She feels Golden Valley has gone from a Waldorf Charter School to a Waldorf "Inspired" School because the Waldorf is being diluted out.  
  
Debi Lenny: Introduced Caleb Buckley as the new Executive Director of Golden Valley Charter Schools. She gave his educational and professional background.  
  
Caleb Buckley: He thanked everyone for inviting him. He's looking forward to being a part of the community. He would like to hold a public meeting and forum to answer questions. He acknowledged there are lots of questions to be answered about the transition. He is looking forward to working with everyone.

Eric Walder: He has been a parent here for 9 years and on the board for 6. The school has undergone tremendous change. He knows a lot has been done and believes everyone is doing a good job.

5. **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Community Forum:** Debi introduced the LCAP using the attached handout. The state priority areas in LCAP are 1. Basic Necessities; 2. Implementation of Common Core State Standards; 3. Parental Involvement; 4. Student Achievement; 5. Student Engagement, 6. School Climate; 7. Access to Courses; 8. Other Student Outcomes in Subject Areas

Debi Lenny spoke to Ruth Cummings concerns and explained that Alice Birney is not a charter school, Alice Birney is a public school with full access to the services provided to all Sacramento City Unified School District schools. As a charter school, GV must provide their own central office and business services.

Susan Gutierrez: She had just finished a two-hour conversation with a trained and experienced Waldorf teacher, and feels what we're offering the children is remarkable. She acknowledged the change that has occurred and believes everyone is doing an excellent job.

There will be more accountability from the State in the future. The CA Collaboration of Educational Excellence is a new agency that will support and hold schools accountable for their LCAP goals.

Faculty Leadership Teams made up of teachers from both schools serve to inform the administration about needs in the areas covered by the LCAP. The Teams are: Upper Grades Curriculum, Lower Grades Curriculum, School Climate, Assessment, Parent Engagement and Festivals and Fundraising. They met approximately every four weeks during the school year.

Upper Grades Curriculum: Teachers are currently using the Waldorf-adapted Common Core State Standards. This year we adopted new math textbooks in the upper grades. Teachers worked hard to make the transition to the new text and curriculum. Most teachers attended *Making Math Real* Professional Development during February.

Lower Grades Curriculum: Teachers are developing a plan for implementing more movement in the lower grades. A small in-service on movement will be held at Orchard School soon.

The School Climate Team requested professional development on the teachers' role in supporting positive behavior plans. This PD will occur during the May 9<sup>th</sup> in-service day. Our school psychologist will do a presentation on children reaching their full potential. We are always working to meet all of the students varied needs.

Assessment Team: Teachers, including our assessments coordinators, Stephanie Lorenz and Jennifer Hoover, are creating and implementing a plan for our 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders to be able to take the computer adapted State tests beginning in the spring of 2018. We currently have a waiver for our 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade student to take a pencil paper version of the test. Computer-adapted testing has been a huge change for us as a "low tech" public Waldorf school.

The arc of our curriculum is different than main stream schools so we are working on how to measure student progress using school developed benchmark assessments. Virtues Project and Nurtured Heart have been put in place to help our children succeed.

Rhoda Cortez: She wants us to retain qualified teachers and asked if we have an internal group that will help us implement the Common Core Standards and stay true to the Waldorf pedagogy.

Debi Lenny: We don't currently have such a group. Lee Pope, Curriculum Specialist, has worked with teachers over the past several years to this end. Now that she is retiring and most of our kinder and class teachers are trained, this would be a good faculty or administration group to put in place.

Heather Fraser Hurtt submitted a letter (attached) regarding the LCAP. She is interested in Golden Valley tracking students as they transition into high school and college/career. Having this data would aid students in their preparation for high school and eventually college and career. She would like to see this as part of the LCAP and offered her services to this end.

Susan Gutierrez: Longitudinal studies are time consuming and hard to track because the researcher is relying on information obtained from former families and students. It is often difficult to track down the families.

Katherine Blankenburg: Have we compared our children's outcomes to those of other schools?

Stephanie Lorenz: Yes, our student Smarter Balanced Test results compared well to the statewide averages. This information was published in the schools' Community News last fall.

Andy Silvert: We have designed our own internal assessments. We are now doing our own internal benchmark assessments to measure our students.

Stephanie Lorenz: We're working really hard to provide the data showing how were doing by merging Common Core State Standards with the Waldorf pedagogy.

Susan Gutierrez: We didn't choose the common core, but we must comply! Our work is to merge the two without compromising our values.

Ryan Sutton: When navigating technology, we have to adapt the best we can to what the state is mandating.

Marnie Whitworth: She sends gratitude to all of the teachers and feels lucky to have had such a wonderful experience here. Her daughter is excited for school. She's had the ability to be an assistant at GV. She loves the Virtue Project and is grateful to the school and the leadership.

Michele Smith: She agrees that we need some kind of tracking to see how our students are doing. She is interested in learning more about merging Common Core with Waldorf education.

Caleb Buckley: Parents in charter schools are fortunate. There is no voice for parents in independent/private schools. The kids who are the least prepared for technology in the independent HS schools are the kids from the Waldorf grade schools. In the independent schools they don't know what to do with students with special needs.

Debi: The importance of striving is an important tenant of Waldorf education. Here at Golden Valley all of us, teachers, staff, parents and students are striving to bring Waldorf education to the public sector. She is grateful to have been part of GV for the past 16 years and to have worked with such committed teachers, staff and parents.

6. **Minutes:** The March 15, 2016 Board of Trustees Regular and April 5, 2016 Special Board of Trustees minutes were approved. (Ayes: 8, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

7. **Executive Director Report:** Executive Director, Debi Lenny, gave the Executive Director report. She reported that Ryan Sutton will take Allie Brooks' Elm Tree Class. Brittnie Carr will be starting as the new Enrollment Coordinator soon.

8. **Chief Operating Officer Report :** Chief Operating Officer, Andy Silvert, reported David Burke (SJ Facilities) can no longer make project decisions independently. All projects must now go through an approval process. Andy, John Baker and Dave Burke recently met and believe the paving project in front of the office at Orchard should be able to be done over the summer. This should eliminate most of the health and safety issues surrounding the potholes and the cracked concrete in that area.

9. **Finance Committee Report:** Finance Committee member, Andy Silvert, reported we have more cash than the projected cash because we're being paid as if River and Orchard are one school. There is \$100K in the bank from Prop 39 energy funding which we will need to pass through to San Juan. All parent donations go through GVEF. GVEF makes a grant to GVCS annually.

10. **Preliminary Budget 2016-17:** There is a \$200K deficit in the preliminary budget going into the next school year. The Board will approve the final budget at the May 17 Board meeting. The Board would like to see more than one recommendation when it comes to cutting services.

11. **Change in PTO Policy:** The Board approved the change to the PTO policy. The newly adopted policy will take effect at the end of the school year. (9 Ayes, 0 Noes, 0 Abstain)

12. **Benefits Proposal Discussion:** The Board discussed a benefits proposal. We've been advised not to give cash in lieu of benefits. We pay 20-30% lower than other charter schools. Finance committee will make a recommendation at the next meeting.

13. **School Safety Plan:** Safety Plans for Orchard School and River School were approved. (Ayes: 9, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

14. **Executive Director (ED) Hiring Task Force Final Report:** The ED Task Force has successfully concluded their work by hiring Caleb Buckley.

15. **Central Office Blue Print Task Force Final Report:** The task force is still in process. They have discovered more things that need to be added. The final report will be presented at the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

16. **Transition Change Management Progress Report:** The taskforce has completed a communication plan to announce the leadership changes to a variety of groups including employees, parents and the outside community.

17. **Committee Reports:** Reports from the following administrative committees and school organizations:

CCSA Families (*J. Ahola*): *CCSA wants to have a better understanding of how our schools are perceived in the community. They want an event at a neutral location to showcase what GV looks like. Advocacy day is May 3 at the state capital. Every legislator is visited by constituents.*

Golden Valley Educational Foundation (*A. Silvert*): They are brainstorming ideas for fundraising. The Big Day of Giving is May 3, 2016. It assembles a variety of non-profits groups. There is a donation matching component to it.

18. **Identify Items for Future Board Training:** Include the Board Primer, which is posted on the GVCS website. If Board members are not returning, they are asked to find their replacement.

19. **Recitation of the Motto of the Social Ethic:**

*The healing social life is found  
When in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community finds its reflection,  
And when, in the community,  
The virtue of each one is living.*

20. **The meeting was adjourned at 7:12.**

Respectfully submitted by: Amala Easton

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John Hanafee, Board Chair

Date